

Connecticut Historical Society  
museum & library

The Haiti Collection

A Guide to the Haiti Collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

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Collection Overview

<b>Repository :</b>	Connecticut Historical Society
<b>Creator :</b>	Morris, Jonathan F.
<b>Title :</b>	The Haiti Collection
<b>Dates :</b>	1796 -- 1888
<b>Extent :</b>	0.25 linear foot(1 box)
<b>Abstract :</b>	Collection consists primarily of letters written by Haitian officials. Also included are prints of Toussaint L'Ouverture as well as some newspaper and journal materials. All correspondence is in French.
<b>Location:</b>	Ms Haiti1888
<b>Language:</b>	English and French

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Country Sketch

The papers found within the Haiti collection cover Haiti's history from the independence struggle of the 1790s until the late 1880s. By the end of the eighteenth century, St.-Domingue prospered in large part due to the importation of African slaves to work on the plantations of sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton. At the start of the French Revolution, Haiti was France's richest colony. But the slogans of 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité' stirred up the passions of several of the poorer classes in the colony, including slaves.

A key figure in the insurrections of the 1790s was Pierre François Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture, three of whose letters exist in the collection. Toussaint was a former slave and proved an effective leader. He joined the French forces in Hispaniola and eventually became their commanding general. In 1801 he completed the conquest of Santo Domingo and proceeded to abolish slavery and declare himself governor general for life.

Unfortunately for Toussaint, the French had by this time made peace with Britain and the United States and Napoleon Bonaparte sent General Charles Leclercq in 1802 to restore French sovereignty. Leclercq captured Toussaint,

and he died in a French prison in 1803. In the meantime, Toussaint's leading generals, Henri Christophe and Jean Jacques Dessalines, had joined Leclercq's forces.

When it became clear that Napoleon intended to restore slavery in the colony, the top black officers defected and joined the insurrectionists. Concerned that Napoleon might use St.-Domingue as a point from which to occupy Louisiana, Thomas Jefferson supplied arms, munitions, and supplies to the insurrectionists. When Britain went to war again with France in 1802, the British Navy prevented Napoleon from sending reinforcements to Leclercq's army; in November 1803, the French surrendered, and in January 1804 Dessalines declared an independent 'Haiti'.

The years following independence, however, were far from calm. The first two decades were characterized by political strife, and there were continuous economic troubles. The United States, Britain, and France made the situation worse by exploiting the country politically and economically. Abraham Lincoln's recognition of Haitian independence in 1862 did do something to bolster Haitian confidence, but this little to solve the dire economic problems. The pattern of power struggles, foreign exploitation, and economic distress would continue well beyond the last date included in this collection: 1888.

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## Scope and Content

Collection consists largely of letters written by Haitian officials, including Toussaint L'Ouverture, Hippolyte Daniel de St. Antoine, and E. Coquierre. There are two prints: one of Pierre François Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture and one of Jean Jacques Dessalines (?). There is also a printed map of Australasia and Polynesia, and newspaper and journal articles.

## Arrangement

Materials are organized into 3 series: Correspondence, Prints, and Printed Material.

**Series I: Correspondence** consists of official correspondence and other documents produced in Haiti. All materials in this series are in French.

**Series II: Prints** consists of printed portraits and one printed map.

**Series III: Printed Material** consists of printed material: newspaper and journal articles, and a calling card.

Collection is arranged chronologically within in each series.

## **Restrictions**

### **Access Restrictions**

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

### **Use Restrictions**

Use of the material requires compliance with the Connecticut Historical Society's Research Center Regulations.

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## **Subject Headings**

### **Personal Names**

Lear, Tobias, 1762-1816.  
Toussaint L'Ouverture, Pierre Francois Dominique, 1743-1803 Portraits.

### **Geographic Names**

Haiti History 1804-1844.  
Haiti History 1844-1915.  
Haiti History Revolution, 1791-1804.

### **Genre Forms**

Holographs; holographs, signed; printed forms completed in manuscript; printed material.

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Preferred Citation**

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

### **Accruals**

The collection is open, but additional material is not expected.

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## Related Material

An index of catalog cards is available to aid access to this collection and material in other collections. Access is through writer, recipient and date. The card catalog is located in the Research Center reading room.

Microfilm copy available.

## Contents:

### I. Correspondence

#### Box Folder

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Correspondence; most from Toussaint L'Ouverture. 1796-1803<br>Note: English translations available in Archives Control File                                   |
| 1 | 2 | Correspondence concerning such individuals as Henry Christophe, Alexandre Petion, and E. Coquierre; includes a notebook containing Créole proverbs. 1804-1843 |
| 1 | 3 | Correspondence concerning such individuals as E. Coquierre, Hippolyte Daniel de St. Antoine, and Bernard-Philippe-Alexis Carrié. 1844-1849                    |
| 1 | 4 | Correspondence concerning such individuals as Hippolyte Daniel de St. Antoine and Pierre Mars. 1850-1859  |
| 1 | 5 | Correspondence concerning such individuals as Hippolyte Daniel de St. Antoine, Aimé Legros, Monsieur Panayoty, and P. Boyer-Coquierre. 1860-1869              |
| 1 | 6 | Letter from Brice, Minister of Haiti. 1872  |
| 1 | 7 | Letter from Jean Baptiste Coq. 1796-1872  |

### II. Prints

#### Box Folder

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|---|---|--|
| 1 | 8 | Prints; including those of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jen Jaques Dessalines (?), and a map of Australasia and Polynesia. 1796-1872<br>Toussaint L'Ouverture print<br>Jean Jaques Dessalines (?) print<br>Map of Australasia and Polynesia |
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### III. Printed material

#### Box Folder

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|---|---|--|
| 1 | 9 | Printed material consisting of newspaper and journal articles, and a calling card. 1803-1888 |
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